

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 SS-15 L-03 DODE-00
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R 101250Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8193
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 5345

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SHUM, BR
SUBJ: ARMS SALES TO BRAZIL

REF: STATE 165331

1. AS EMBASSY INDICATED IN BRASILIA 4703, THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SITUATION IS VERY FLUID BUT MOVING LARGELY IN A DIRECTION CONSISTENT WITH US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES HERE. THIS IS TRUE BOTH GENERALLY AND WITH REGARD TO ISSUES OF SPECIFIC INTEREST AND CONCERN TO THE USG, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS BROADLY ACKNOWLEDGED, INCLUDING BY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MDB AND THE CHURCH, THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. MOST RECENTLY, THE GOB HAS ENDED THE LAST SIGNIFICANT TRACES OF PRESS CENSORSHIP (ALTHOUGH RETAINING CENSORSHIP OF RADIO AND TV), AND HAS FORMALLY PLEDGED ITSELF TO REINSTATING FULL HABEAS CORPUS FOR POLITICAL CRIMES. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR, SAO PAULO CARDINAL ARNS, RIO DE JANEIRO CARDINAL SALLES, PAPAL NUNCIO, REPRESENTING THREE DIFFERENT CHURCH CONSTITUENCIES, ALL REMARKED INDEPENDENTLY ON IMPROVEMENT IN SITUATION (BRASILIA 5074, 5160 AND 4622 RESPECTIVELY). CARDINAL ARNS VOLUNTEERED THAT INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES HE HAD

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HELPED STIMULATE AGAINST BRAZIL IN THIS AREA WERE NO LONGER NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL.

2. ALL THIS CALSS INTO QUESTION THE EFFICACY AND DESIRABILITY OF DELAYS IN ISSUANCE OF MUNITIONS CONTROL LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR THE BRAZILIAN ARMED FORCES AS A POLICY INSTRUMENT.

THE POLICE FUNCTION PERFORMED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 1964 REVOLUTION HAS BEEN RETURNED TO THE APPROPRIATE POLICE AUTHORITIES. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DISTINGUISH, HOWEVER, BETWEEN LICENSING APPLICATIONS FOR THE BRAZILIAN ARMED FORCES AND FOR THE POLICE. THE LATTER SHOULD BE REVIEWED BY EMBASSY WHEN SUBMITTED BEFORE APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT. ITEMS LISTED PARA 1, REFTEL ARE CLEARLY FOR MILITARY AS OPPOSED TO POLICE PURPOSES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITEM FOUR (FOR SAO PAULO POLICE ACADEMY) AND PERHAPS ITEM NINE. OTHER LICENSE APPLICATIONS ARE MOSTLY SPARE PARTS WHICH WILL KEEP OLDER GENERATIONS OF US EQUIPMENT FUNCTIONING AND DEFER INVESTMENT IN MORE EXPENSIVE MODERN SYSTEMS. WE CONCUR IN THEIR ISSUANCE AND RECOMMEND POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THE ADVISORY OPINIONS FOR OTHER MILITARY SYSTEMS LISTED. THIS WILL ELIMINATE ONE MINOR BARRIER THAT OVER THE LONG TERM MIGHT IMPEDE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND BRAZIL.

3. WE SHARE DEPARTMENT'S RESERVATION ABOUT LICENSING SMATL ARMS. AMMUNITION AND RIOT CONTROL EQUIPMENT FOR THE POLICE. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN SEEING THIS CASE APPROVED ONE EXCEPTION TO OUR GENERAL RESERVATION COULD BE THE \$1274 CASE FOR TWO RIFLES, SHOTGUN, REVOLVER AND AMMUNITION FOR SAO PAULO POLICE ACADEMY. THE MUNITIONS CONTROL LICENSE APPLICATION WAS SUBMITTED TO THE ACADEMY WHEN ARMS IN QUESTION PURCHASED IN THE US BY A SAO PAULO POLICE AGENT WERE SEIZED AT MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BY A US CUSTOMS OFFICIAL. THE POLICE AGENT INDICATED, PROBABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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TRUTHFULLY, THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXPORT LICENSE REQUIREMENT. AMCONGEN SAO PAULO HAS BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT THE ARMS, ALTHOUGH OFFICIALLY PURCHASED BY THE POLICE ACADEMY, WERE INTENDED FOR THE PERSONAL NON-OFFICIAL USE OF FORMER SAO PAULO SECRETARY FOR STATE SECURITY ERASMO DIAS, WHO HAS SINCE RETIRED. WE DOUBT THAT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION WOULD EVER BE USED FOR POLICE PURPOSES, OR BE DIVERTED FROM HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION. NONETHELESS, WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN SEEING THE CASE APPROVED GIVEN DIAS' NOTORIETY IN SAO PAULO STEMMING FROM HIS HEAVY-HANDED PERFORMANCE IN HIS PREVIOUS POSITION.

4. WE QUESTION, HOWEVER, TO WHAT USE CRAWFORD MAC 10 MACHINE GUN WILL BE PUT (ITEM NINE). DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO QUERY FORM SEEKING LICENSE TO DETERMINE BRAZILIAN END-USER IDENTITY. UNLESS IT WERE FOR THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF HIGH RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WE WOULD OPPOSE ITS SALE TO THE POLICE BUT NOT TO ARMED FORCES. SARYE

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